



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

The Workshop

A Monthly Journal, devoted to Progress of the Useful Arts.

EDITED BY
I. SCHNORR AND OTHERS.

VOL. VII.

No. 3.

THE VIENNA EXHIBITION IN CONNEXION WITH ART-INDUSTRY.*

BY JACOB FALKE.

VIII. LEATHER AND ENAMEL.

Although the two branches of Art-industry which we now propose to notice have as little as possible in common either as to material or technique, yet, as the fashion of the present times has combined them, and even imitates the one by means of the other, we may be pardoned if we bring them before our readers in one and the same article. What the World's Exhibition has not scrupled to join together, we may assuredly be permitted to unite here.

Leather has been a much used, and as often abused material for the exercise of Art. In the trivial taste of the last century, however, it fell into discredit, as being too homely and solid, and was replaced, as a medium for decoration, in articles of furniture and in bookbinding, by velvet, silk or paper. Considered as old fashioned, it shared the fate of the old carved pieces of domestic furniture, of brass and other things, which were compelled to give way before the lighter articles of modern times. In what parts of the world its old technique is still retained, may easily be seen in the present Exhibition. Spain, from whose Arabo-mauritanian factories ornamental leatherworks originally proceeded, Brazil, and the old Spanish colonies, are the only countries where they are now met with. From Brazil, we see sofas and shairs covered with embossed leather exactly similar to the Spanish works of the seventeenth century, and Spain herself exhibits the same kind of leather, stamped or in gaily coloured relief, especially in her saddlery and horse accoutrements.

But modern industry has now once more brought leather into fashion as a material for fancy goods, particularly for the so-called Vienna articles, but instead of returning to the ancient technique, it gave them every season a new fashionable colour, generally from aniline dyes, or left them in the natural colour of the skin, white, black, brown or mottled. Leather was the watchword, and gold and silver, bronze, wood and even porcelain were made to take the appearance of leather in form, colour and texture. The specimens from Hanau and Offenbach, from Vienna and other cities are a proof, alas, that this abuse is in some degree still adhered to, though there is a gradually increasing inclination to leave to the material its own special properties.

This appreciation of leather would not, of course, be overlooked by the bookbinding trade, either in its most elegant or more modest productions. We can well remember the time, and even now works of this kind are produced, when books were splendidly bound in gold-embossed velvet, and when, if anything very costly was required, gilded bronze, and sometimes even silver ornaments were nailed on to the velvet, combined also with enamel, ivory and wood carvings, jewels and many other things. As leather has now recovered its due estimation, it is taken instead of velvet as the groundwork, and all the above mentioned ornaments are superadded to it, and thus leather has come into combination with enamel.

This kind of artistic leatherwork is still in very general use; examples of it are to be seen in the French department from Marx of Paris, as frames for photographic portraits surrounded by openworked steel, gilded bronze and enamel; from Knipp in Hanau, and more especially from the Vienna manufacturers, who have

* Continued from page 17 *ante*.

brought this kind of work into vogue and fashion. The specimens exhibited by A. Klein, Rosenberg, Rodeck, M. Klein, and above all, by Groner are very numerous. The genre is in no wise changed: the same material, the same technique is employed as of old, only now more from a picturesque than a plastic point of view. The reliefs which were formerly high, and often of the boldest, are now more modest, keeping rather within the limits of a surface decoration, which such works ought never to overpass. In consequence of this, enamel has also come into fuller and more extensive use.

In their ornamentation however, these works have attempted some novelties, not indeed on the principle of the old ornamental technique, to which the Spaniards and Spanish Americans still adhere, but in a manner not altogether in harmony with the nature of the material. One highly favoured fashion of the present day, that of framing in a dark leather ground painted porcelains, representing flowers, children, dancing men and women, exactly resembling a Florentine mosaic, is hardly to be mentioned as worthy of approbation. The materials do not harmonise, and the æsthetical effect is hard and unpleasant. Far better is the imitation of email cloisonné in little pieces of coloured leather cut out according to a design, set in order and separated by bands of gilt metal. This is certainly an imitation of a foreign technique, but the effect is very agreeable, if the soft colours of the leather are carefully selected. Sometimes also, the cloisonné is left out and then the whole work is exactly similar to mosaic or marquetry. Many beautiful objects of this kind are to be seen in the Austrian department, not only from the above named manufacturers, who exhibit large specimens, such as caskets, safes and desks, but also from bookbinders, and in some pretty articles after designs by Fischbach from Knipp in Hanau. These works produce the more effect in proportion to their merely ornamental character; if they are intended to represent coloured figures they become unappropriate. This is plainly seen in the articles exhibited by Weidmann of Vienna.

In contrast to this technique which is especially of Viennese origin, the French and English bookbinders have again taken for their models the bindings of the sixteenth century, more particularly those known by the name of the celebrated Bibliophil Grollier. These are simple coverings of leather, as simply adorned with straight or curved lines of gold impressed by hand. This treatment is most in accordance with the nature of the material, equally practical for its preservation and the convenience of the librarian, and at the same time it is noble and elegant. Its charm is derived from the beauty of the arabesques and from the neatness and precision of the execution. The readoption of this kind of binding is indeed the very best novelty in modern leatherwork. There are many excellent specimens in the Exhibited, especially among the English and French bookbinders. Of the former, Zähnsdorff of London has exhibited a whole collection of bindings, the value of which is from twelve to sixteen hundred florins. The great French printers and booksellers, such as Hachette of Paris, and Mame and Son of Tours, and the book-

binder Laudrie have sent a rich selection, but partly too much modernised and frenchified, the designs being often too bizarre, and the colours too dependent on mere fashion. Vienna has also contributed some pretty specimens from the firms of J. Kritz, and Wunder and Kölbl.

In an artistic point of view, Enamel, in the nineteenth century had, if not entirely forgotten, sunk to a lower depth than the leatherwork. With the exception of a very trifling employment of it, in the decoration of clocks and ornaments in gold, the remains of the former century, it had entirely disappeared from works of art in metal, among which it had formerly played so conspicuous a part. Within a short time, however, as the present Exhibition testifies, it has revived to a new and full life, and come into use in various ways, a success which we owe first of all, to the antiquarian tendencies of the age.

With regard to the enamel, it was ecclesiastical art which first derived advantage from it. Especially the enamel of the lower Rhine in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the *champlevé*, came into renewed and richer use in those cities so celebrated for art, Cologne, Aix la Chapelle and Treves, and then in Belgium, for the decoration of their metal ecclesiastical vessels, relics, censers, chalices &c. We see it in the Vienna Exhibition in extensive use and in excellent examples. The most magnificent collection of such ecclesiastical works, adorned with the *champlevé* after the manner of mediæval times, is exhibited by Poussielque-Rusand of Paris, among which is a large shrine for relics similar in character to that of the three Kings at Cologne. The Rhine provinces, originators of the renewed art, are very inadequately, indeed scarcely at all represented as regards these works: a few Westphalian manufactories only shew that the practice of it is not confined to the Rhenish towns. Belgium also (Bourdon de Bruyne in Ghent, J. Willmotte Junior in Liege) has contributed only few specimens, but these very excellent ones, in strictly early mediæval style. In Vienna, several goldsmiths and metal-workers have successfully taken up this style of enamel for the ornamentation of ecclesiastical vessels, among them we may name Brix and Anders, and Charles Haas. In the Austrian compartment are also similar works by other goldsmiths, for example by Matzenauer.

The French, especially Barbedienne, were the first to apply this kind of enamel (the *champlevé*), formerly exclusively confined to ecclesiastical art, to domestic articles, lamps, chandeliers, vases, plates, inkstands and other objects. Elkington of London next followed their example. It was not however, until the use of the Chinese cloisonné enamel upon large copper articles became known, that these works came into any great industrial vogue, but with imitations of these, enamel came into a certain fashion for domestic vessels of costly character. The Vienna Exhibition has a rich display of them, and Christoffle has at the same time extended the application to gold and silver, and increased the number of colours and shades, for copper does not take every colour or give it its full fire. In the Paris Exhibition of

1867 were to be seen ornaments of the early mediæval type, as we find them on the enamels of Cologne, Limoges or China. The enamels now exhibited by Barbedienne, Christofle and others as well as those of Elkington have in many cases besides these ornaments, such modern designs as landscapes with birds.

Another French enameller, Pottier, has confined himself exclusively to the so-called painted enamel, and has distinguished himself especially by his imitation of the best Limoges works of the sixteenth century. With this exception, this kind of work was scarcely represented in the Exhibition; only one Austrian artist, Macht, formerly a pupil of the School of Art in the Austrian Museum has for many years been a successful labourer in the same department. His painted enamels are to be seen in the exhibition of fancy articles by August Klein. In the same collection also are some new attempts by a Vienna enameller, Chardt, of a similar but more ornamental character.

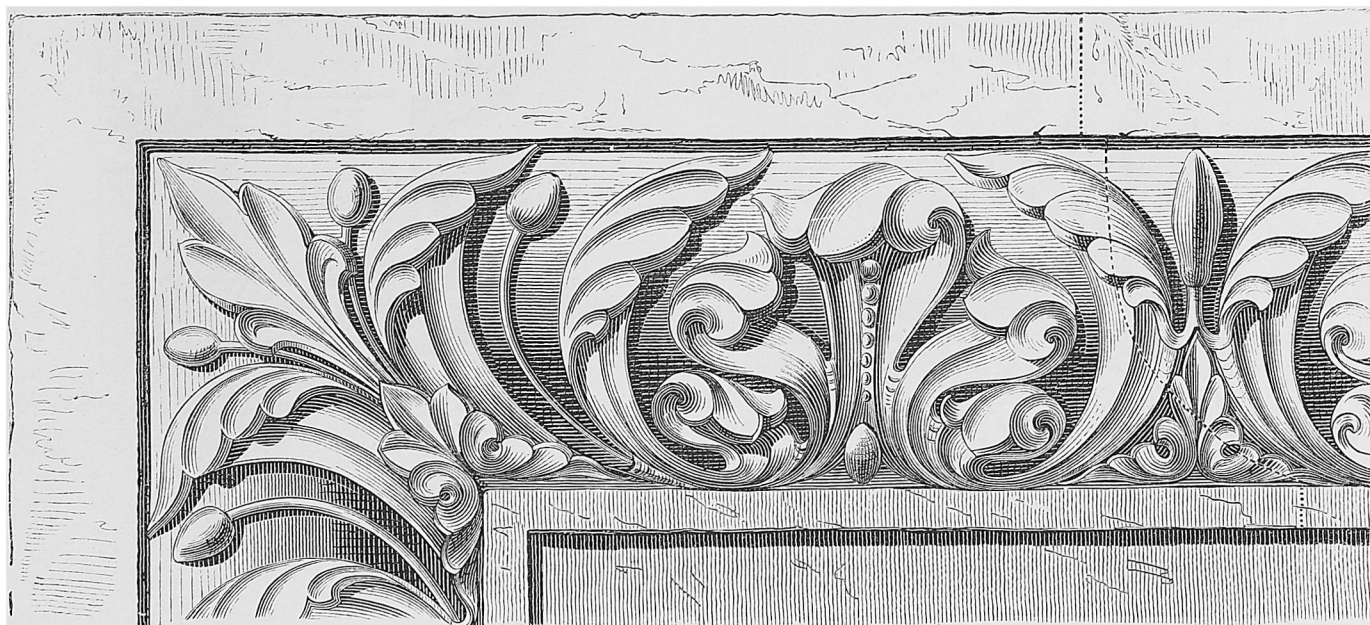
To the Vienna enamellers is especially due also the revival of the translucent ornamental enamel on an engraved groundwork of silver. This delicate and charming art was first taken up again by Ratzersdorfer in Vienna after old patterns by David Attemstätter of Augsburg, and is now practised by a number of engravers whose works are principally applied to the above-named leather articles and album covers. Of these we may name the engraver Kleeberg. A similar enamel, but on a gold ground, most successfully executed, is seen in specimens of personal ornament exhibited in the Indian department. The Bronze manufacturers of Vienna also, Hollenbach, and Hanusch are employed in applying enamel as an ornament for chandeliers, lamps and other objects.

With the exception of the Indian works, gold ornaments have not made that use of enamels which might have been expected from the general impulse given to this kind of decoration. A few French goldsmiths only

show more preference for enamel; among them Emile Philippe with his Egyptian and Byzantine motives, and the firm of Paville and Pavié of Paris, who entirely surround their ornaments with coloured enamel in the manner of the sixteenth century. Other Parisian manufacturers only employ miniature sheets of enamel in portraits or small pictures which they set in gold. There is however a large number of Russian goldsmiths, who both in their ornaments and in other gold and silverworks make such use of enamel, especially of the translucent, that their productions are distinguished from the other European works by their variegated colours. Their ornamentation also is peculiar, though less successful, since they transfer to the enamel the stiff rectilineal character of their wooden architecture. We must however acknowledge that the Russian exhibition, though there is much to criticise in its individual specimens, is, on the whole, rich and important.

The modern Hungarian ornaments also, which imitate the old, and which are represented both in the Austrian and Hungarian compartment by Egger, Böhm and others, have taken up enamel in the Renaissance style, surrounding the object, as did their models, with opaque enamel, which again receives ornaments. In these enamel works, particularly in small miniature paintings, by far the most distinguished artist is the Vienna goldsmith Ratzersdorfer, of whom we have already spoken in our description of gold and silver work. He employs enamel as an ornament for works of larger dimensions, goblets, drinking horns, jugs, boxes, &c.

Thus we have seen in the Exhibition enamel revived in many places, and in almost all the old methods, sometimes more so, sometimes less, but that which is perhaps the finest of all kinds, namely the Byzantine cloisonné on delicate gold plates with gold cloison, we look for in vain in modern Art-industry.



No. 1. German Romanesque. Carved Border of Tombstone in Church of St. Mary on the Capitol, in Cologne.